



Friends of the **Randell Research Center**

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Recovering from Ian and Expanding our Reach!

Message from the Director *The Hurricane Ian Recovery Process*

Dear Friends,

Following my presentation at the Museum Director's luncheon at the RRC, one consistent question came up: when is the (*entire*) Calusa Heritage Trail going to be back and open for business? Although my talk had focused on re-kindling research efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, it was gratifying to learn that so many people were concerned about our need to become once again fully accessible to the public. So I'd like to take this opportunity to address the hurdles and opportunities posed in re-opening the trail for all of you as I did for those in attendance that day.



**Charlie Cobb – Director,
Randell Research Center**

I would first like to point out that we always emphasize above all else the health and safety of employees, volunteers, and guests. When I got my first chance to visit the trail in December following the hurricane, I was shocked to learn that we were still experiencing major falls from large trees that had been partially uprooted during the storm. In addition, a glance up into the tree canopy along the trail showed many broken branches dangling and ready to drop in the next high wind. That knowledge, combined with the fact that the foot bridge had suffered significant damage, led us to the decision to close off the major part of the trail, while opening up the small loop next to the classroom building.

Opening the entirety of the Heritage Trail will require the replacement of the bridge, the replacement of Brown's Mound overlook, and clearing fallen trees (our staff have done an amazing job thus far but the remaining vegetation requires special equipment). The progress of that work, and of the RRC building renovations, requires

completing a trifecta (or, if you are a hockey fan, a hat trick). First, we require completed assessments from the state insurance adjustor along with an estimate of what the state insurance will or will not cover; a parallel assessment from FEMA that determines what they will pay for; and hard estimates from contractors who will carry out various aspects of the work, which then have to be approved by the university in a bidding process.

To make a very long story short, some of these data are just now becoming available to us. As everyone knows, building and landscape contractors in the region have been inundated with work. We were not able to obtain firm landscaping quotes until recently. Likewise, insurance and FEMA adjustors have been overloaded. All of this work must follow strict guidelines set by safety and

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A Brief History of the Randell Research Center

Part 3: 2004-2023

As part of our celebration of the RRC's 25th anniversary, we invited Bill Marquardt, RRC's co-founder and first director, to summarize some of the key events in its history.

by Bill Marquardt



Close your eyes for a minute and listen. Unless you are hearing-impaired, you are likely to notice something – traffic, a distant air conditioner, the cooling fan of your computer, maybe your refrigerator. If you are outdoors, perhaps you'll hear a bird's song or the rustle of wind in the trees. As Karen Walker and I sat on the front porch of the Ruby Gill House eating our PB&J sandwiches on August 14, 2004, it was truly silent – no traffic, no machines, no birds, no wind, not even a fly or a mosquito. A compact, fast-moving, and powerful hurricane named Charley had roared across the northern end of Pine Island the day before, hurrying on to Orlando and points beyond. Karen and I had packed the car with ice, water, and food that required no refrigeration (hence PB&J for dinner) and driven to Pineland from Gainesville to assess the damage and begin clean-up.

Vegetation was down everywhere, especially non-native species. Signs were missing, electric power and phone service were non-existent. The teaching pavilion at the site, built to resist serious storms, was unharmed, but the roofs of the Gill House and post office had leaked, so first we swept out the water and secured the roofs with tarps. Then we began to clean things, using the abundant

Cindy Bear explains the Calusa and their environment to a visiting school group, April 2013. (Photo by W. Marquardt.)

rainwater from the cistern. Within a few days, friends and colleagues showed up from Gainesville with work clothes, big coolers of food, and drinking water, and the first phase of cleanup was accomplished amidst the searing summer heat (RRC News, vol. 3, no. 4; <https://www.floridamuseum.ufl.edu/rrc/newsletter/>). After securing their own homes, John Worth and his staff continued on.

Hurricane Charley delayed the opening of the long-planned Calusa Heritage Trail until December. The Trail had been funded in part by a grant from the Florida Division of Historical Resources and sponsored by a leadership gift from Dwight and Susan Sippelle.

Citrus canker invaded South Florida in the aftermath of Charley. Although there was no canker on our trees, authorities insisted on destroying the RRC's trees and those of our neighbors, erasing the last vestiges of historic groves that had once dominated Pineland.

In December, 2005, the Gill House and Pineland Post Office were added to Lee County's list of Designated



Volunteers plant a tree at the RRC in 2007 during the habitat restoration project. (Photo by W. Marquardt.)

Historical Resources. A grant from the Florida Division of Forestry helped with habitat restoration in 2006 and 2007, a process made difficult by a drought. With the help of volunteers and the guidance of professionals Brady Vogt and John Cauthen, we planted 800 native trees and shrubs.

A matching grant from the State allowed us to complete architect Jeff Mudgett's design for the classroom and gift-shop portion of the visitor center in 2006. Furniture was installed, and the first public lecture was offered on January 13, 2007. Later that year, the National Endowment for the Humanities funded the curation and storage of materials excavated at Pineland 1988-1995 and all associated records. An unexpected event in 2007 was the destruction of a portion Brown's Complex Mound 4 for the enlargement of a septic drainfield on private property (RRC News, vol. 7, no. 3). This had been required by the County Health Department, and Pineland was not on the County's list of historical resources. This was remedied in January 2018 so that now archaeologists can be involved when similar situations arise.

Meanwhile, grants were received from the Lee County Historic Preservation Board, first to stabilize the Gill House and post office, then to create a master historic-preservation plan for rehabilitating the Gill House. Architect Linda Stevenson created the plan and Bob Rude provided structural engineering consultation. Funds were received from the Lee County Tourist Development Council, the Arts and Attractions Fund of the Southwest Florida Community Foundation, and many private citizens, including leadership gifts from Paul and Warren Miller

and Dwight and Susan Sippelle. Rehabilitation was completed by general contractor Dale Schneider in 2010 (RRC News, vol. 9, no. 2). We were able not just to bring the house back to where it was before, but to improve it with a better heating and cooling system, a hard-wired Internet, and a stronger structure, including the roof. In 2009, with assistance from FEMA, we restored the old dock across the street from the Randell Mound, creating an observation pier for the public. FEMA also paid for a new maintenance structure to replace the old "tractor shed" that had been blown down by Charley.

Research continued: climate-change studies by Karen Walker, Donna Surge, and Ting Wang; Michael Wylde's excavations on Brown's Complex Mound 5; and Melissa Ayvaz's on Citrus Ridge. Cindy Bear joined our staff as coordinator in 2011. The sixth annual Calusa Heritage Day

Although there was no canker on our trees, authorities insisted on destroying the RRC's trees and those of our neighbors, erasing the last vestiges of historic groves that had once dominated Pineland.

in March attracted more than 800 to the site, as did the seventh in 2012. In fall 2012, RRC archaeologists and volunteers explored deposits on the southern end of Useppa Island that dated to some 3,000 years ago. In 2013, The Archaeology of Pineland book was published. In fall 2013, Cindy led a project to enhance interpretive



Karen Walker conducts docent training in shell and bone identification in the RRC classroom, January, 2015. (Photo by W. Marquardt.)

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materials in the classroom and to improve the trail leading to the Smith Mound, both funded by an Arts and Attractions grant from the Southwest Florida Community Foundation. She also improved docent and volunteer training, promoted visits by school children, began the Harbor History tours in cooperation with Captiva Cruises and the Tarpon Lodge and narrated by Dené Patterson, and taught Florida Master Naturalist classes at Pineland.

The ninth Calusa Heritage Day was held in March 2014, and in the fall our first RRC popular-series book became available: Marty Kendall's *The Plant World of the Calusa*. The year 2015 saw the funding of a new grant from the National Science Foundation for research on fuelwoods by Lee Newsom, Karen Walker, and Jennifer Haney, as well as the purchase of five acres, adding the Smith and Low

Visitors to the RRC made their own pots, which were then fired to demonstrate how the Calusa probably made their ceramic vessels. (Photo by W. Marquardt.)

mounds to the managed RRC property. Funding was provided $\frac{3}{4}$ by Tim and Judith Sear and $\frac{1}{4}$ by the Calusa Land Trust. In the summer of the same year, an emergency salvage project in the front yard of the Wilson Sisters house at Pineland revealed extraordinarily well-preserved wood and cordage dating to around 1,000 years ago.

In 2016, Cindy coordinated removal of exotic invasive vegetation from the new 5-acre parcel, funded by the Felburn Foundation, and interpretive signs were designed by Merald Clark thanks to support from the Florida Humanities Council. The new extension of the Calusa Heritage Trail opened in spring, 2017 and that same year saw the second in our popular series, Dené's *A Tour of the Islands of Pine Island Sound*; the tenth Calusa Heritage Day; and a follow-up investigation of the shoreline midden first discovered in 2015.

Guided tours for the public as well as focused school tours continued, conducted by our docents. A new endowment funded by the Sear Family Foundation allowed us to bring children from elementary schools to the site who had not previously had that opportunity due to financial constraints.

By 2019, the RRC was hosting more than 10,000 visitors per year from many parts of the U.S. and several foreign countries and was being assisted by more than 75 volunteers. By 2020, however, the COVID-19 virus was causing uncertainty and caution. Cindy and her staff responded

HARBOR HISTORY TOURS

2024

Randell Research Center is partnering with
Captiva Cruises to offer an informative boat tour
about the fascinating geology, archaeology, and
history of northern Pine Island Sound.
These trips fill quickly; reserve today.

Check-in at the Calusa Heritage Trail
13810 Waterfront Drive
Pineland, FL 33945

Noon - 2:00pm
January 20th
February 7th
March 9th
March 20th

Randell Research Center at Pineland
Florida Museum of Natural History

Tickets: \$35 per person
Call Captiva Cruises
for reservations
239-472-5300


CAPTIVA CRUISES
PINE ISLAND, FLORIDA



with changes to the visitor center, hands-free drinking fountain and restroom faucets, a new payment system for the gift shop, and masking requirements in group settings.

With the retirements of Bill Marquardt (2018), Cindy Bear (2021), and Karen Walker (2021), new RRC leaders assumed their roles. Annisa Karim became the new Operations Manager, Charlie Cobb the Director, Michelle LeFebvre the Assistant Director, and Jennifer Green the Collections Manager. September 28, 2022, brought a new challenge to southwest Florida in the form of Ian – like Charley, a powerful Category 4 hurricane, but larger, slower-moving, and more flood-producing. Large parts of Fort Myers Beach, Matlacha, and Pine Island were devastated. Bridges and causeways were washed away. A

storm surge damaged the historic Pineland Post Office and Gill House. Exacerbating the problem was the initial difficulty of access to the island due to the destruction at Matlacha.

In my final article as Director of the RRC (RRC News, vol. 17, no. 2), I reflected on resiliency and how both the Calusa people and the RRC had managed time and time again to respond to new challenges. Ian is not the last hurricane that will impact Pine Island. Global warming is increasing the likelihood and frequency of serious storm damages. As new leaders of the RRC work through the process of recovery and rehabilitation, I hope all who read this will continue to support the RRC with their money and time. There is nothing else like it, and it is worth it. 



A Bridge to the Future

Charlie Cobb

Dear friends, a priority of Randell Research Center and Florida Museum leadership has been to open the entirety of the Calusa Heritage Trail, as quickly and safely as possible, so visitors can roam the Pineland landscape and we can once again welcome classes of fourth-grade students to explore the full trail. We are pleased to share that, with the help of a committed volunteer corps and dedicated staff, a majority of the Calusa Heritage Trail has been cleaned up and unstable trees and extensive debris are no longer a safety concern. We now turn our focus to the rebuilding of the canal bridge and ask for your support as together we build a bridge to the future.

The bidding process for bridge construction is already underway and we hope to have construction completed by the end of January 2024. We are pulling funds from our reserves to ensure that uncertainty around FEMA funding and timelines does not slow our efforts, and we look to you –our dear friends and supporters– to help us fill the anticipated gap between replacement value and a new, upgraded bridge that meets contemporary safety and durability codes. The estimated cost of the new bridge before upgrades is \$16,500. While the upgrades will be costlier, the decreased maintenance costs and increased longevity and accessibility are a silver lining. If we exceed our goal, we will put those funds towards a new observation deck on Brown's Mound, again aiming for significant upgrades in construction.



Canal Foot Bridge severely damaged by hurricane.

(Photo by Annisa Karim.)

We are incredibly grateful for your ongoing support and are eager to return to a full schedule of educational programs for schoolchildren and lifelong learners, welcoming our visitors to explore the wonders of the Calusa Heritage Trail and the archaeology, history, and ecology of Southwest Florida.

Please, make a gift and help build a bridge to the future!

Checks may be made out to the UF Foundation and mailed to Development Department, Florida Museum of Natural History, PO Box 112710, Gainesville, FL 32611. Please remember to insert a note that this is for the bridge project!

Give online at <https://www.uff.ufl.edu/giving-opportunities/005449-randell-research-center/>

Thank you for sharing in this vision!



Archaeologists awarded NSF grant to survey Florida cultural heritage sites damaged by Hurricane Ian

by Jerald Pinson

The National Science Foundation awarded emergency funding to archaeologists at three institutions to survey cultural heritage sites damaged by Hurricane Ian. Researchers from the Florida Museum of Natural History, Pennsylvania State University and the University of Georgia collectively received more than \$65,000 to carry out on-site surveys and generate high-resolution damage and risk-assessment maps for a region encompassing 20-square-miles.

"Our target areas around Pine Island Sound and Estero Bay were ground zero for the storm," said Michelle LeFebvre, Florida Museum curator of South Florida archaeology and ethnography and the principal investigator on the collaborative grant.

The category 4 storm made landfall over southwest Florida on September 28 with sustained 150 mph winds, tying a record for the fifth strongest hurricane to breach land in United States' history. The coast along Fort Myers was pummeled by storm surge of up to 18 feet, shattering previous records and inundating urban centers and historic sites. In the city proper, the Caloosahatchee River spilled over its banks and contributed to widespread flooding that lingered for days after the storm had passed.

When the skies cleared, entire communities had been rendered uninhabitable and millions of people were left without power. With an estimated \$67 billion in insured losses, Ian was the costliest storm to ever hit the Sunshine State, and repairs to homes, businesses and parks will likely continue for the next several years.

The area that received the brunt of high winds and flooding was once the cultural hub of the Calusa people, who lived in South Florida for more than 1,000 years.

"By the 16th century, the Calusa were arguably one of the most politically complex non-agrarian societies in North America, and they were remarkable for their resilience in the face of European colonialism," LeFebvre said.

Isabelle Holland-Lulewicz, an assistant professor of anthropology at Penn State and collaborator on the grant, studies the ways in which past cultures interacted with their environments in North America. To her, the Calusa



Michelle LeFebvre (left), Jeremiah Scoone (center), and Charles Cobb (right) survey Hurricane Damage. (Photo by Annisa Karim.)

heritage preserved in South Florida is incomparable.

"These sites are some of the most well-preserved examples of Indigenous architecture in the southeastern United States and promote a lot of community outreach in terms of archaeological research and public education," she said.

Many of the region's topographic features were built or altered by the Calusa, including large mounds, canals and fish corrals called water courts, and it's likely Hurricane Ian damaged or even destroyed parts of these structures.

"We're anticipating heavy erosion and destruction of vegetation, particularly among archaeological sites located on barrier and smaller islands, such as Pine Island and Mound Key," LeFebvre said.

Many of the sites are located on Pine Island, including the Pineland Archaeological District. Within this district, the Florida Museum's Randell Research Center hosts 67 acres of preserved Calusa shell mounds, middens and the remnants of a canal system. The center's Calusa Heritage Trail, which takes visitors on an interpretative one-mile tour of the island's most prominent archaeological structures, received significant damage during the storm, as did the center's headquarters in the historic Ruby Gill House.



Site managers across the survey region have reported widespread damage and expressed concern for future preservation.

"A primary focus of our survey work at the Randell Research Center and other Calusa sites will be to help support the hurricane recovery efforts of the communities that rely on and love these remarkable places," LeFebvre said. "Often when speaking with locals, after they share updates on the recovery of their family, friends and community, the next thing they want to discuss is how we can all best move forward with site recovery and accessibility. That is our collective goal."

Collaborators on the grant emphasize that archaeological sites across the region are significant places to Florida's Indigenous peoples and that all survey information will be shared with tribal communities through regular updates and consultation.

LeFebvre and Holland-Lulewicz will coordinate the initial surveys, which they anticipate taking place from December of this year through March 2023. Victor Thompson, a distinguished professor of archaeology at the University of Georgia will organize drone flights to conduct aerial surveys during the same period.

Florida Museum curator of artificial intelligence, Nicolas Gauthier, will concurrently create damage assessment maps with data from satellite imagery taken both before and after the storm, which he will supplement with photographs from the aerial surveys.

"We're using machine learning to trawl through a massive amount of data to find out which areas have been most affected and to assess current and future vulnerabilities to storm events," Gauthier said. The maps will then be made publicly available as a resource for people on the ground to aid in near and long-term restoration efforts.

"We also have a lot of data about the event itself, including estimates of storm surge and the hurricane's track," he said. Gauthier plans to combine all this information with models of increasing hurricane frequency, sea level rise and storm surge to map how the area will change over the course of the next century.

Results of the survey will help inform which areas need the most protection going forward. Sites that were hit particularly hard by Ian or that are predicted to be the locus of increasingly severe damage in the future will be earmarked as areas of special concern.

LeFebvre and Gauthier stress that these and other survey efforts are critical to creating a bulwark against the compounding threats of rising seas and stronger storms. But they're also optimistic in the face of these accelerating changes, suggesting the clues to building lasting communities may be hidden in the very sites they're trying to preserve.

"This has all happened before," Gauthier said. "People have lived and thrived here for thousands of years, so we hope to learn as much about these sites' continued resilience over the long term as we do their short-term vulnerability."



Strengthening the Disaster Risk Management Plan for Pineland Archaeological Site Complex

by Natalie A. De La Torre Salas, Public Archaeologist with the Florida Public Archaeology Network – Southwest

One of the coolest things about my job is collaborating with amazing people who share a deep passion for archaeology, heritage preservation, and conservation. Last August, I had the incredible opportunity to participate in the International Training Course (ITC) on Disaster Risk Management of Cultural Heritage, organized by Ritsumeikan University in collaboration with the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM). I couldn't resist choosing Pineland Archaeological Site Complex

as a case study to prepare a Disaster Risk Management Plan (DRM).

These DRM plans are important because they can better help site managers and staff to prepare and respond to disasters by creating a clear chain of command and steps to take depending on different hazards and disaster scenarios. So, to develop a draft plan for Pineland's DRM, I had to envision the site's worst-case scenario. Even before the occurrence of Hurricane Ian, I had already

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Natalie A. De La Torre Salas and Annisa Karim discuss logistics of the implementation of the DRM plan. (Photo by Andy Jendrusiak.)

begun envisioning Pineland's worst-case disaster scenario as a Category 5 hurricane striking southwest Florida, resulting in severe damage to the mounds, artifacts, and other structures. Sadly, this scenario turned into a reality with the landfall of hurricane Ian on September 28, 2022. However, the first-hand experiences and lessons learned from Hurricane Ian have provided valuable insights that I am now grateful to share with others.

Fast forward to early June, Annisa Karim, Operations Manager at the RRC, and I were finally able to sit down at Pineland on a very sunny and humid morning to discuss all of this work. Let's delve into what we've been up to:

Two-fold Education Approach

We recognize the importance of both publicly owned portions and privately owned properties, such as Adam's

Mound of the Pineland Archaeological Site Complex. To address this, we are taking a two-fold educational approach. First, we plan to send letters to private property owners, inviting them to the RRC to discuss potential hazards and risks on their properties. Second, we aim to provide education and information to the staff, volunteers, and the general public associated with emergency preparedness and mitigation measures for natural hazards like flooding, wildfires and hurricanes. To be clear, our information would focus on cultural heritage. We have plenty of very qualified and experienced organizations to help people with personal preparedness.

Incorporating New Information

In our ongoing efforts to develop a comprehensive DRM plan, we are coordinating programs to actively discuss and integrate new insights from the dedicated staff, volunteers, and stakeholders at the RRC. We are particularly excited to incorporate the latest data on archaeological surveys conducted after Hurricane Ian on Pineland by the Florida Museum, Pennsylvania State University, and the University of Georgia. We also discussed starting a process of networking and negotiating with civil protection groups and the Matlacha Fire Department to host training on how they can care for cultural heritage and aid the RRC in better preparing for wildfires.

Putting Plans Into Action

Our objective is to reduce disaster risks to the Pineland Archaeological Site Complex, its captivating landscape, and biodiversity. To achieve this, we are planning to schedule designated days throughout the year to review and practice the preparedness and mitigation measures outlined in the plan. This approach ensures effective mitigation strategies for each zone and heritage attribute of the site, including the archaeological sites, landscape, and buildings.

Join Us!

Recovery from a disaster is a process, not a plan. Places like the Calusa Heritage Trail at the RRC can help us reclaim a sense of normalcy and reestablish our bond with nature. We warmly invite you to stay in the loop and actively engage in the RRC and the Florida Public Archaeology Network's programs and efforts and we hope to see you soon!



It's a Bird, It's a Plane, It's a...Drone!

by Jen Green

For those of you who spent time near the center from January to early March of this year, you might have noticed something buzzing around in the distance. Jen Green (South Florida Archaeology Collections Manager, FLMNH) and Daniel Spikowski (Calusa Land Trust) were a couple of the participants in a drone-based mapping and imagery course instructed by Jim Blanchard, ScD of the Unmanned Autonomous Systems Academy (UASA) and Johns Hopkins University. The RRC was a great place to host the "field" portion of the course. Green and Spikowski joined other professionals from across the country to learn the implementation of aerial mapping using drones in a broad array of contexts including from the land and by boat, two important skills for working on Pine Island.

Green and Spikowski earned their Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) remote pilot certificates to operate drones under Part 107 of the FAA's code for small, unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) for drone operations that cover a broad spectrum of government and research purposes.

So, what purposes could the RRC use drones for - you might ask?

That's a great question!

1. **Comprehensive Property Coverage:** The team flew several missions to map the entire RRC property. As the drone flies overhead, a series of photographs are taken using software-controlled timing and set distances in an overlapping grid pattern. Once the mission is completed, the data (i.e., photographs and GPS points) are uploaded into a computer software system. The software then uses the information from the overlapping photos to stitch together a comprehensive aerial map of the property.
2. **Documenting/Tracking Property Vegetation:** Using the same technique as above, the same mission of mapping the property can be carried out on a semi-annual or annual basis to track vegetative growth and changes to the property after storm activity, fires, droughts, or cyclical seasonal changes. Using drones to complement boots on the ground vegetation surveys will help us to render as detailed as possible assessments of site vegetation, including evaluating overall percentage changes of vegetation on the landscape



Jen Green (left) and Daniel Spikowski (right) at Surf Clam Ridge preparing to collect LiDAR data. (Photo by Annisa Karim.)

using computer software to estimate biomass changes from mapping event to mapping event.

3. **Public Outreach and 3D-Site Models:** Instead of flying the drone with the camera straight down, Green, Spikowski, and Blanchard also flew the same overall site grids but this time with the camera angled at 45° angles. Because of the camera angle, the drone can capture images underneath the dense tree canopies across the property. The structures captured in the software (i.e., the trees) can then be manipulated to see through the canopy to the ground surface, or even be removed to visualize what the surface and shapes of the various mounds on the property look like.
4. **Calusa Mapping:** Different types of sensors (e.g., Light Detection and Ranging - LiDAR) can be mounted onto drones to detect infrared changes and thus identify low and high elevation zones both from the UV signal plants give off, and from standing water areas (or those that are highly saturated). The team flew missions across the Grand Canal and followed it east down Brian Wilder's property (RRC neighbor, permission received before flight).
5. **Shoreline and Environmental Assessments:** The team also assisted our long-time friends and partners at the Calusa Land Trust (CLT) to map and document shoreline erosion and mangrove habitats on Calusa Island on the north side of Bokeelia near Jug Creek Marina.

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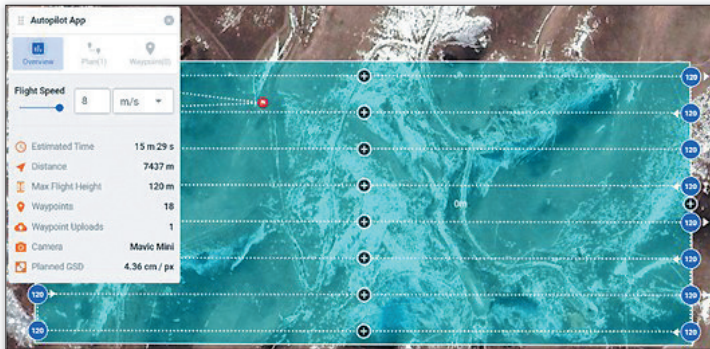


The CTL plans to operate missions throughout the years to document long distance sand/sediment dispersal across the property's shoreline and to track mangrove propagation success as land management tools to better understand how to protect the sensitive tropical hardwood hammock ecosystem.

We are very excited to have conducted this work at the RRC and on Calusa Island this year. Incorporating new technologies to the field of archaeology brings a wealth



Jen Green (center), manager for the South Florida archaeology and ethnography learns how to set-up her drone (RRC Classroom). (Photo by Annisa Karim.)



Example of an automated drone mapping mission using a grid system. (Photo by Annisa Karim.)

of new information for us to explore, opportunities to train students, and to share these stories with the public. And for those of you itching to know about the beloved ospreys at the RRC, they sat perched in the gumbo limbos and the telephone pole nests keeping an eye on the team but were not troubled or agitated by the new buzzing activity.

Wishing Linda a Joyous Retirement!

by Annisa Karim

Linda Heffner has been an integral member of our team for years! She started her journey with the RRC as a part-time employee in October 2006 and August 31, 2023 was her last day with us here at RRC. Over the past years she has filled many roles and was ultimately offered the job of administrative assistant in 2017. In talking with Linda about her time here, she expressed gratitude for having the opportunity to work with our amazing volunteers. "They are so knowledgeable about the Calusa and southwest Florida. You can tell they care about the place because of the time they spend wanting to get everything right. I've been able to get to know many of them and I will really miss their smiling faces. They're all so wonderful in their own way."

Some of Linda's most treasured times have been spent working with and learning about the archaeology of southwest Florida from people she considers her mentors – Bill Marquardt, Karen Walker, and Cindy Bear. Similarly, Linda was enthusiastic and happy to work with the "next generation" (in her words) of RRC leadership – Director, Charlie Cobb, Assistant Director, Michelle LeFebvre, and me. "I love how Charlie, Michelle, and you are expanding the types of research we do here and involving so many

researchers from Gainesville and south-west Florida! I think it's great," she explained.

Linda's departure is bittersweet; she values the friendships she's made here and in Gainesville and appreciates the support everyone has given her over the years. "When I moved to Florida, I couldn't have imagined I'd have a job that I loved

so much and that meant so much to me. I'll definitely miss the RRC and Pine Island. I'm looking forward to a change of scenery and new adventures in retirement when I move to Georgia," said Linda.

We'll truly miss Linda and her positive energy here at the RRC and, of course, we wish her a happy and healthy retirement!



Linda Heffner.
(Photo by Annisa Karim.)



Friends of the Randell Research Center

Pineland, Florida • November 2023
Phone 239-283-2157
Email: rrc@flmnh.ufl.edu

Dear Friend,

In 2001, the Friends of the Randell Research Center (RRC) was created as a giving society to support the programs and activities of the RRC through its endowment and operating funds. Our Friends organization provides an important component of the financial stability of the RRC. Your continuing support is vital to our mission. It means more research, more education, and continued site improvements at the Randell Research Center. I invite you to join us or renew your membership today. Thank you.

Best Regards,

Annisa Karim

Annisa Karim
Operations Manager
Randell Research Center



Please check the membership level you prefer, and send this form with your check payable to UF Foundation, to:

Membership Coordinator • Randell Research Center • PO Box 608 • Pineland, Florida 33945

To join using a credit card, please phone UFF Gifts & Records at (352) 392-8091 or (877) 351-2377 and reference the fund number 005449 or donate online at <https://www.uff.ufl.edu/giving-opportunities/005449-randell-research-center/>.

- ☐ **Individual (\$30) and Student (\$15):** Newsletter and free admission to Calusa Heritage Trail
- ☐ **Family (\$50):** The above + advance notice on special events and programs
- ☐ **Contributor (\$100-\$499):** The above + 10% discount on RRC publications and merchandise
- ☐ **Sponsor (\$500-\$999):** The above + invitation to annual Director's tour and reception
- ☐ **Supporter (\$1,000-\$4,999):** The above + listing on annual donor plaque at Pineland site
- ☐ **Sustaining Members (\$5,000-\$19,999), Benefactors (\$20,000-\$99,999), and Patrons (\$100,000 and above):** receive all of the above + complimentary RRC publications and special briefings from the Director.
- ☐ **Donation:** This donation is in addition to my membership in order to support RRC programs. (Please contact us to earmark donations to special projects.)

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Phone number _____

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Address _____

City / State / Zipcode _____

Use my seasonal address from _____ to _____
(date) (date)

For more information about establishing an endowment, creating a bequest or charitable remainder trust, or giving gifts of property or securities, please contact Marie Emmerson, Senior Director of Development, emmerson@ufl.edu, cell: 352-256-9614.

The Randell Research Center is a program of the Florida Museum of Natural History, University of Florida.

Thank you for your support.





Friends of the Randell Research Center

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procurement rules. As much as we love the Heritage Trail, our staff realized that it was a lower priority than the many, many homes and businesses that had been severely

...the fact that the foot bridge had suffered significant damage, led us to the decision to close off the major part of the trail, while opening up the small loop next to the classroom building.

feel the same way. I am hoping in the very near future that our RRC blog (through our website) will contain pictures of work as it is initiated and then moves toward completion. And we cannot wait for the day for the grand re-opening of the Heritage Trail, a day which we hope many of you will be able to share with us in person.

As our staff continue to do their due diligence in making sure the recovery process is safe and follows our fiscal procedures, we are setting up for an exciting season ahead. We were able to acquire funding from the National Science Foundation to carry out on-site surveys and generate high-

resolution damage and risk-assessment maps for Pine Island and Estero Island. We've formed powerful new partnerships to expand our reach across the Calusa Coast. Our recovery IS happening and we're forming partnerships to conduct new research in the future. In the meantime, I certainly hope you take the time to get to the RRC this winter and attend a lecture, go on a guided walk, or enjoy a Harbor History Tour on the water!

With my best regards,

Charlie!



damaged or wiped out by Hurricane Ian. So we've had to be patient for our turn in the line, which now seems to be arriving.

I cannot thank all of our supporters enough for your patience and continued passion for the RRC. Your eagerness to have things return to normal is a reflection of that, and we dearly

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